



Annual Impact Report

2026

Oct. 1, 2025 – Sept. 30, 2026

Executive Summary

The Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW) believes in a vision of health, safety, and well-being for all working people. In Fiscal Year 2026 (FY '26), that idea came to life across hospitals, schools, correctional facilities, and organizations preparing for crises. Through research, partnerships, and dissemination, CPH-NEW carried forward its mission to create workplaces where safety, health, and productivity thrive together.

This report details research impacts for healthcare workers, k-12 teachers, and workers in other sectors during a challenging economy. With support from CPH-NEW researchers, healthcare personnel in Massachusetts helped to lead work quality improvements to enhance well-being. They assessed ways to sustain a successful participatory safety and well-being program to ensure long-lasting gains. In six Connecticut elementary schools, CPH-NEW researchers administered large-scale surveys, coached school-based well-being program leaders, and implemented the Educator Well-being Program. Employers from multiple industry sectors completed CPH-NEW's new Employer Crisis Preparedness eLearning course, gaining knowledge and tools to plan for crises with worker well-being in mind. In the Connecticut Department of Corrections (DOC), the CPH-NEW HITEC program is now state-supported. With CPH-NEW advising, DOC continues to deliver the HITEC "for workers, by workers" well-being program for corrections staff.

Our *Total Worker Health*® R-2-P (research to practice) Hub project had world-wide impact on professionals and students in occupational safety and health, healthcare, occupational medicine, and human resources disciplines. Our website was viewed over 17,665 times by visitors from 142 countries. Visitors read issue briefs, accessed program tools, webinars, and newsletters. Professionals from all 50 states have gained critical knowledge needed to safeguard the workforce through professional learning courses. We also invested in the future OSH workforce development by engaging 25 students in research and practice activities that honed their skills for career readiness.

These accomplishments have real impacts on workers, employers, and the economy. In the sections that follow, we will explore each of the Center's major projects in greater depth. Read on to learn about our strategic goals and accomplishments during the past 12 months. Together, they tell a story of impact in New England, the US, and the world.

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Strategic Goals

The Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW) is a NIOSH Center of Excellence for *Total Worker Health* (TWH). Our vision is health, safety, and well-being for all working people. We pursue this vision through four overarching goals.

Goal 1: Conduct Rigorous Research

We conduct research that addresses urgent worker health challenges such as burnout, stress, and turnover. We study *how* to apply TWH principles in a workplace and *the benefits and costs*. Our studies are co-created with workers and employers to ensure findings are meaningful.

Goal 2: Build Capacity and Practical Tools

Research must translate into action to reach its potential. We create practical tools and resources that organizations can adopt immediately. And we train professionals to give them the knowledge and skills to apply TWH approaches in the workplace.

Goal 3: Disseminate Evidence Broadly

We disseminate innovative TWH concepts, research findings, and program materials to the people who need it most. Through presentations, webinars, online toolkits, publications, and partnerships, our resources are shared widely.

Goal 4: Train a *Total Worker Health* Workforce

Since 2006 our training and education courses have reached more than 15,000 professionals to strengthen their impact as occupational health and safety. Over 150 students have engaged deeply in our projects, gaining valuable experience and preparing them as future occupational safety and health leaders.

Research

Strengthening the Healthcare Workforce

The SHIFT II Study: Safety and Health in Integrated Facilitated Teams

Principal Investigator: Alicia Kurowski, Sc.D., Research Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, University of MA Lowell

Healthcare workers face intense stress and burnout from long hours, short staffing, and the emotional demands of care, driving exhaustion, turnover, and even exit from the profession. [SHIFT II study](#) addresses these challenges by embedding participatory problem-solving in a public mental health hospital, giving frontline staff a voice in decisions. This multi-phase participatory action research project tests two approaches to advancing *Total Worker Health* strategies: an organizational training program equipping staff and leaders to collaboratively address health and safety challenges; and a union-based training program that strengthens worker capacity to do the same through collective action.



“The skills learned in this training will help me be a more effective leader. I will implement the training in my treatment teams to help build cohesion.”

- Healthcare worker

Action-oriented Research

In FY 2026, we followed our hospital study partner as they attempted to independently sustain a Healthy Workplace Participatory Program. Mental healthcare workers formed a “design team” to tackle the most urgent challenges identified by staff, like workplace violence, physical health, and organizational communication. The design team applied a step-by-step process to brainstorm, evaluate, and prioritize solutions. What made these sessions different from traditional committees was that staff themselves led the way, guided by CPH-NEW’s research-based facilitation training. The results speak for themselves – successful labor-management collaboration resulted in the hospital taking meaningful steps to improve the work environment.

Making Invisible Challenges Visible Using Art-based Evaluation

We engaged workers in an arts-based evaluation to assess factors supporting or deterring sustainability of the HWPP. Workers created collages (photo on right) to show parts of the HWPP

[illegible]

A collage showing factors supporting and detracting from sustainment of the

Accomplishments in FY26

- Strengthened the hospital's capacity to sustain a well-being program that emphasizes worker voices and labor-management teamwork.
- Expanded participatory leadership practices beyond the original design team and into routine hospital meetings and management processes.
- Generated practical knowledge about what healthcare organizations need to sustain participatory workplace improvement programs over time.
- Achieved early signs of improved morale, communication, and staff retention in a mental health hospital study site, which will also benefit patient care.

SHIFT II demonstrates how healthcare organizations can address work factors that contribute to stress, burnout, and turnover by involving those who understand those challenges best: frontline workers along with their leaders. Participatory approaches generate practical interventions while building the skills, relationships, and organizational processes needed to identify problems early, navigate conflict, and develop collaborative solutions. By strengthening participatory leadership, SHIFT II helps move worker voice from a time-limited research activity into routine organizational decision-making. A healthcare organization that supports its workforce is better equipped to provide safe, consistent, and high-quality patient care. Lessons from SHIFT II can help healthcare organizations create healthier work environments and sustain improvements over time.

Research

Strengthening the Education Workforce The Total Teacher Health Study

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Cavallari, Sc.D., C.I.H., Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences, University of CT School of Medicine

Educator mental health is vital, as high levels of stress and burnout undermine teaching quality and student success. Because educators play such a vital role in shaping learning environments, their well-being directly influences the health of schools and communities. Addressing educator stress is essential to sustaining a strong, resilient, and effective education system. This is why the [Total Teacher Health \(TTH\) project](#) was created: to understand and improve the conditions that support educator well-being.

Understanding the Problems (and Silver Linings) for School Improvement

In FY 2026, the project team surveyed over 300 educators across two school districts to assess educator's perspectives on their mental health and working conditions.

The results were striking. Educators reported high levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, findings that mirrored the stories administrators had been hearing informally for years. The survey also uncovered something important: protective factors. Teachers who reported stronger supervisor support, recognition, and collegial relationships showed greater resilience and lower intentions to leave the profession.

These results were not only data points; they are a guidepost. District leaders used the survey findings to prioritize interventions, and schools began to see the value of systematically measuring educator well-being.



"The whole process has just been very validating... our voices have been heard, so, I just really appreciate the whole process."

- Elementary School Educator

Building Solutions: The Educator Well-being Program

Data is powerful, but it must be paired with action to make a difference. In FY 2026, the study team supported educators as they implemented CPH-NEW's Educator Well-being Program. This participatory program model provides schools with a structured way to identify problems, brainstorm solutions, and implement changes together.

Five elementary schools implemented the EWP this year, supported by customized survey reports that translated complex data into accessible visuals. These tools gave staff a starting point for conversations about stress, workload, and needed support systems.

Early Signs of Change

While the Educator Well-being Program is still in its implementation phase, the early feedback and results are encouraging. Schools reported stronger morale and teamwork as staff began to see that their concerns were taken seriously. Administrators noted that the process helped bridge gaps between teachers and school leaders, creating new avenues for dialogue. Follow up survey results show declines in work stress and symptoms of anxiety among educators in schools implementing the EWP.

Accomplishments in FY26

- Collected surveys from 300+ educators across two Connecticut school districts.
- Schools used data and program activities to guide work changes that address stress due to excessive demands and disruptive student behaviors.
- Nine new educator well-being interventions/initiatives were implemented among the five participating schools.
- Identified declines in educators' work stress and anxiety among schools implementing the Educator Well-Being Program.
- Conducted seven focus groups to evaluate organizational-level program impact.
- Revised and expanded the Educator Well-being Program Toolkit.
- Delivered 14 presentations at 6 conferences across the U.S. and internationally.
- The Total Teacher Health team received the University of Connecticut's 2026 Provost Award for Excellence in Community Engaged Scholarship.

Why It Matters

The accomplishments of the TTH project impact more than just the educators directly involved. They address one of the most pressing public health issues in education: educator stress. By equipping schools with both data and participatory tools, the TTH project helps create healthier environments where teachers and students can thrive.

Outreach

Translating Research to Action

The *Total Worker Health* Research to Practice (R2P) Hub

Principal Investigator: Suzanne Nobrega, Ph.D., Outreach Director, Department of Biomedical Engineering, University of MA Lowell

Research matters most when it guides real-world practice. Our *Total Worker Health* R2P Hub is the bridge between CPH-NEW's science and action by workers, employers, policymakers, and unions to build healthier workplaces. In FY 2026, CPH-NEW Outreach activities disseminated resources broadly, engaged new audiences, and expanded our digital footprint worldwide.

Building Professionals' Knowledge and Skills

This year, CPH-NEW investigators delivered 51 presentations, workshops, and webinars, translating complex research findings into actionable insights across industry sectors.

In 2026, we conducted a national assessment of *Total Worker Health* training curricula to identify priorities for future training programs. We added a new course, Understanding Job Stress, to fill an important training gap for professionals in fields of occupational health and human resources. We refreshed our online continuing education portfolio in a new learning management platform, adding interactive instructional tools for better user experience.



Building Global Access to Critical Worker Safety and Well-being Resources

CPH-NEW's digital outreach dissemination continued to grow in FY 2026. The CPH-NEW website attracted 17,665 visitors from 142 countries. This global reach demonstrates the relevance of CPH-NEW's resources, especially our pages focused on the [financial](#) and [health](#) effects of job stress and the [Healthy Workplace Participatory Program \(HWPP\)](#). During FY 2026, CPH-NEW social media accounts have 1,081 followers across social media channels, and 2905 views on [YouTube](#), CPH-NEW's research findings, intervention products, and training announcements ensured that CPH-NEW's science reached audiences from union halls to boardrooms to academic forums.

Building Employer Capacity with Tools for Professionals and Leaders

The Center's [HWPP](#) is a nationally and internationally recognized employer toolkit that transfers *Total Worker Health* knowledge into action. The HWPP's unique focus on engaging workers in creating effective, sustainable solutions sets it apart from commercially available programs. The [HWPP online toolkit](#) now includes an [Organizational Readiness Toolkit](#) and a [Champion Toolkit](#). These resources enable executives, middle managers, and worker leaders to use participatory problem-solving approaches more effectively.

During FY 2026, we redesigned the CPH-NEW website to enable industry professionals to find valuable, practice-based tools more easily. Website visitors can now search our website by role and industry sector, enabling quick access to tailored education, information, and tools.

Disseminating Programs that Work – Well-being for and by Corrections Staff



Corrections work is one of the toughest professions, with high stress, burnout, and a life expectancy 12 years shorter than average. The HITEC program addresses these challenges by empowering correctional staff to take an active role in addressing health and safety challenges.

In Connecticut, the CPH-NEW HITEC program brought officers, unions, and leaders together to improve mental health, stress, nutrition, sleep, and fitness. Its success led the State of CT to appropriate funding in 2021 to sustain the program. Today, CPH-NEW continues to support CT DOC in integrating HITEC into agency structures, training, and practice; the state program website, [HITEC-DOC.com](#), was launched in 2024. HITEC's impact extends nationally through the National Corrections Collaborative, a consortium to advance safety and well-being across the U.S. corrections sector.

Accomplishments in FY26

- Reached 17,665 website visitors from 142 countries.
- Trained 77 professionals on TWH practice approaches.
- Created the CPH-NEW Course Catalog, which includes:
 - *Total Worker Health* Employer Crisis Preparedness
 - *Total Worker Health* for Students
 - **NEW!** Introduction to *Total Worker Health* Principles
 - **NEW!** Fundamentals of *Total Worker Health* Practice
 - **NEW!** Understanding Job Stress
 - **NEW!** Ergonomics in Healthcare
- Redesigned the CPH-NEW website to support specific roles in learning about the TWH approach, such as [occupational safety and health professionals](#), [human resource professionals](#), and [union leaders](#). Tailored industry web pages support efficient searches for resources relevant for [health care](#), [corrections](#), and [education](#) sectors.

Why It Matters

CPH-NEW's outreach activities moved research into action to benefit the workplace. When a corrections officer downloads a toolkit, when an employer accesses our issue briefs, then they can use research-based knowledge or practice to benefit their workers.

For the public, CPH-NEW's outreach activities ensure that taxpayer-supported research translates into real-world benefits. Outreach connects workers and employers with evidence-based tools they can use immediately, strengthening safety, health, and resilience for the U.S. workforce.



Training the Next Generation

Preparing for Tomorrow's *Total Worker Health* Professionals

Workforce health and safety depends, in part, on preparing new leaders who understand both the science of occupational health and the lived realities of work. CPH-NEW integrates students into every project, giving them the chance to contribute to meaningful research while developing the skills they will need as future professionals.

In FY 2026, 15 graduate students were employed by CPH-NEW as research assistants or received academic credit for research and outreach roles. Students helped design surveys, facilitated focus groups, analyzed qualitative and quantitative data, and developed educational materials that communicated research-based information to professionals.

For example, in the Total Teacher Health project, students administered an all-employee survey in six schools and prepared customized reports. In SHIFT II, students worked alongside staff to prepare and facilitate an arts-based program evaluation and analyzed the content of collages and narratives. In the Outreach project, students prepared eLearning education materials, digital health communications, and employer toolkits that reached thousands of practitioners.

These experiences developed students' technical skills and relational skills that are vital for serving workers, employers, and community stakeholders. Students produced infographics, manuscripts, reports, and presentations that now form part of their professional portfolios.

Presenting at National and International Scientific Meetings

Student accomplishments extended well beyond the classroom. They authored abstracts and presented presentations and posters at major conferences, including the 17th Conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology, the 15th Annual Symposium on Human Factors/Ergonomic in Organizational Design and Management, and the 3rd International Symposium to Advance *Total Worker Health*. These opportunities gave trainees experience in communicating research to diverse audiences and expanded their professional networks.

Mentorship and Professional Growth

Beyond technical training, CPH-NEW emphasized mentorship and professional development. Students participated in semi-annual Center retreats, created individualized development plans, and received guidance from faculty and staff on career planning. They were encouraged to see themselves not only as researchers but also as future leaders who can bridge the gap between science and practice.

Accomplishments in FY26

- Trained 12 graduate students in research methods, curriculum development, as well as program management and evaluation.
- 14 students contributed to manuscripts and/or presented at scientific conferences in the US and internationally.
- 25 students participated in two semi-annual student research symposia.



CPH-NEW Student Research Symposium, May 2026, Publick House Inn and Conference Center, Sturbridge, MA

Why It Matters

Training is one of CPH-NEW's most enduring accomplishments because it ensures a pipeline of qualified professionals prepared in the *Total Worker Health* approach. Students bring the skills they learn into the workplace to become the occupational health professionals, researchers, and leaders of tomorrow.

For the public, this matters because it strengthens the national workforce devoted to worker safety and well-being. The impact of training does not end when a project closes, it continues through the graduates who will shape healthier workplaces for decades to come.

Closing

FY 2026 was a year of progress, partnership, and proof of concept. Across sectors CPH-NEW demonstrated that worker well-being is not a secondary concern, it is central to resilience, productivity, and public health.

Across all projects, the output of FY 2026 was tangible and practical. The intermediate outcomes showed that stakeholders are already adopting and applying our research-based resources. And the ultimate outcomes of improved morale, engagement, resilience, and workforce sustainability directly support lasting economic and public health benefits.

For the public, our accomplishments translate to safer hospitals, healthier schools, and better working conditions. For the federal government, our accomplishments demonstrate that investment in our *Total Worker Health* Center for Excellence is producing measurable impact in the day-to-day lives of workers.

Taken together, CPH-NEW is on track to meet our goals of conducting rigorous research, building capacity and practical tools, disseminating valuable evidence, and training a *Total Worker Health* workforce to achieve our vision of health, safety, and well-being for all working people.

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